

TECHNIQUE FOR APPLYING GAS MASK TO A HELPLESS PATIENT

War Department, Washington 25, D. C.

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This bulletin follows TB MED 168, subject, "Diabetes Mellitus." Distribution given TB MED 168 was identical to that given TB MED 142.

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1. **PURPOSE.** A standard procedure for masking helpless patients is highly desirable so that through practice the masking procedure can be carried out with great dispatch by the hospital personnel. In the event that gas warfare is employed, rear installations will be subject to attack by air. It is therefore important for medical personnel in all echelons to be prepared for all eventualities.

2. **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.** *a.* Patients may be helpless because they are unconscious or because free movement is restricted by casts, bandages, or pain.

b. The patient may be immobilized in a prone or supine position, and the technique of masking would vary accordingly.

c. The types of gas mask available in various theaters of operations differ. The lightweight service mask (M3 and M4 facepieces) is the one most widely distributed. In some theaters, however, the combat mask (M5 facepiece) is in limited use, and in other theaters the older service mask (M2A1 or M2A2 facepieces) is still the item of issue. Since the facepieces on these masks are similar, the technique for masking a helpless patient will be essentially the same, irrespective of the type of mask available.

d. In the event of gas attack, hospital personnel will apply their own masks before attending the patients.

e. Patients' gas masks will be at all times slung at the head of the bed. *The head harness straps should be at full length when mask is not in use.*

3. **TECHNIQUE OF APPLYING AND REMOVING MASK FOR HELPLESS PATIENTS.** *a. Patient in prone position:* (1) The carrier is removed from the head of the bed. The facepiece and hose are removed from the carrier. The carrier is placed conveniently on the bed. The attendant stands at patient's right side.

(2) Grasp the facepiece below the outlet valve with the right hand (fig. 1).

(3) With the left hand grasp the triangular patch of the head harness (*straps are at full length*) and bring the entire head harness to the outside of the facepiece. At the completion of this step, the triangular patch is over the nose portion (figs. 1 and 2).

(4) With the left hand on the patient's forehead, lift the patient's head just enough to seat his chin in the facepiece (fig. 3).

(5) Transfer the weight of the patient's head to the right hand and with the left hand pull the harness over the patient's head and adjust the straps (figs. 4, 5, and 6).

(6) If the patient is conscious and able to cooperate, he is asked to clear the facepiece by exhaling forcefully while the attendant obstructs the outlet valve (fig. 7). The facepiece



Figure 1. The facepiece is grasped below the outlet valve with the right hand. The patch of the head harness is grasped with the left hand.



Figure 2. The head harness has been brought to the front of the facepiece. The head harness patch is now over the nose portion.



Figure 3. The patient's head is lifted with left hand while right hand holds mask in position for masking.



Figure 4. With mask in place, the weight of patient's head is now supported in the right hand.



Figure 7. If the patient is conscious he is asked to clear facepiece by exhaling forcefully while attendant obstructs outlet valve.

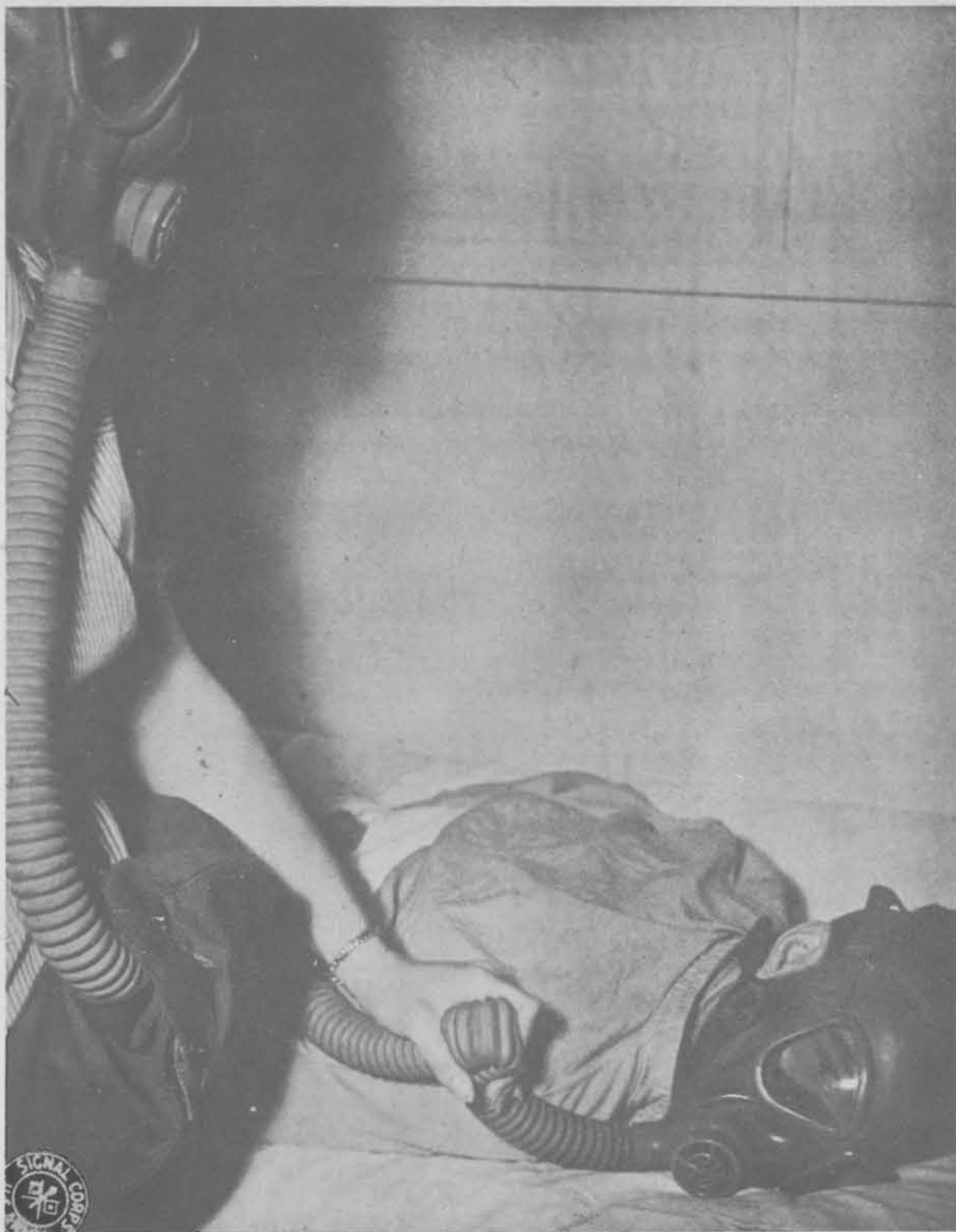


Figure 8. If patient is conscious, the attendant obstructs the hose by pinching it and requests the patient to inhale forcefully in order to test for leaks.



Figure 9. (The all-clear signal having been given, the attendant has removed her own mask.) The head harness straps have been loosened to full extent. The head is supported with the left hand as the mask is being lifted off with the right hand.



Figure 10. The head is supported with left hand. The mask, with the head harness already brought to the front, is in position to be applied to the face.

Note. With patient in supine position, steps 1, 2, and 3 are the same as with patient in prone position (see figs. 1 and 2).

is then readjusted and checked for an airtight seal in the approved manner (fig. 8).

(7) When the all-clear signal is given, hospital attendants will test for gas and remove their own gas masks first.

(8) To remove patient's mask, loosen all straps to full length and grasp mask below outlet valve with the right hand. Place the left hand under the patient's head. While supporting the patient's head with the left hand, pull the facepiece downward with the right hand, thus putting the head harness straps on a

stretch. Then lift the facepiece over the patient's face toward the back of the head (fig. 9).

(9) Replace the mask into the carrier in the approved manner and re-sling the carrier at the head of the bed. The head harness straps are left at full length (fig. 13).

b. Patient in supine position. (1) Step (1) is the same as *a*(1) above.

(2) Step (2) is the same as *a*(2) above.

(3) Step (3) is the same as *a*(3) above.

(4) While supporting the back of the patient's head with the left hand, the facepiece is

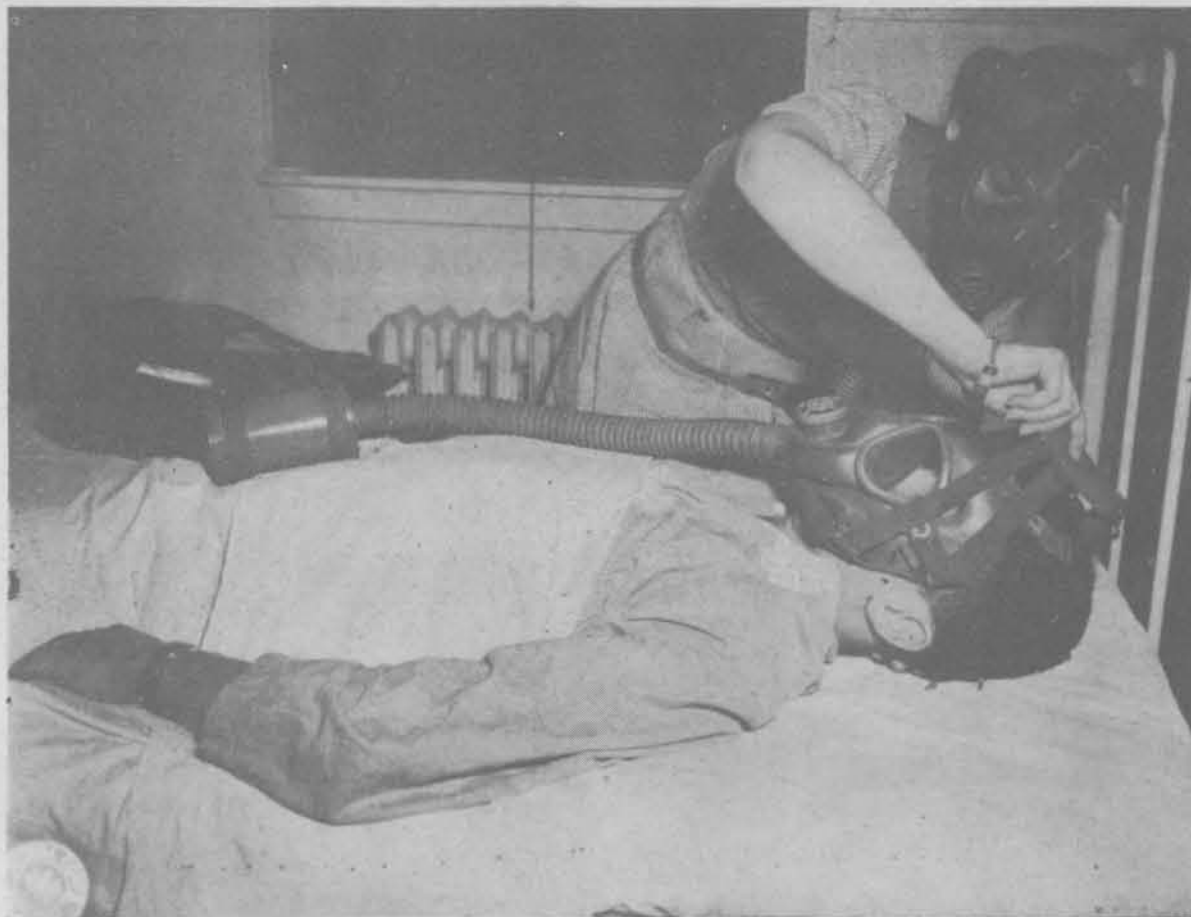


Figure 11. The head harness is brought into proper position with the right hand while the left hand lifts the patient's head just enough to allow adjustment of harness.

firmly seated on the patient's face by a movement toward the top of the head, making certain that the chin is well seated (fig. 10).

(5) The head harness is now pulled over the head with the right hand and the straps are adjusted (fig. 11).

(6) Step (6) is the same as *a*(6) above.

(7) Step (7) is the same as *a*(7) above.

(8) To remove the patient's gas mask, loosen all straps to full length, grasp the mask below the outlet valve with the right hand, and while supporting the back of the patient's head with

the left hand, lift the facepiece toward the back of the patient's head with the right hand (fig. 12).

4. **HEADWOUND GAS MASK.** The Headwound Gas Mask is described, and directions for its use are given, in TB 3-205-5. It should be used in the presence of head, face, jaw, and neck injuries with bandages which would interfere with the fit of the standard gas mask, and also in cases of neck injury where lifting the patient's head, as described above, would be contraindicated.



Figure 12. (The all-clear signal having been given, the attendant has removed her own mask.) The head harness straps have been loosened to their full length. The mask is removed by pulling facepiece downward to stretch straps and then lifting facepiece over patient's face.



Figure 13. The head harness straps are left fully extended when patient's mask is replaced into carrier.
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Refer to FM 21-6 for explanation of distribution formula.